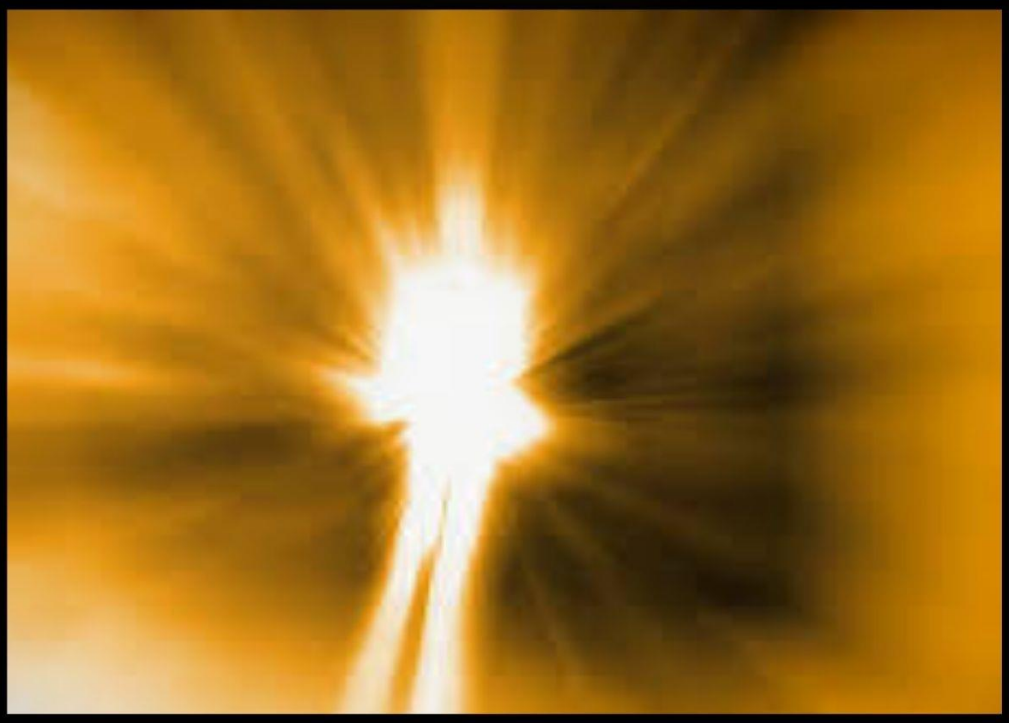
Messages From The Afterlife



Francisco C. Xavier

Irmão X

Chapters

MESSAGES FROM THE AFTERLIFE

TO THE READER

At present, few intellectuals consider the possibility of writing a book after death. Personally, throughout my literary production in the world, I have never let on any hint of belief in this sense.

Clinging to the resigned materialism of my later years, discouraged before the transcendent problems of the Hereafter, I did not have the courage to face them, as Medeiros, Albuquerque, and Coelho Neto once did. I was fearful of the failure they testified to, like restless and reckless sailors returning to the arid port of human prejudice.

They barely had set sail on the great doctrine voyage, where sincere, fearless, and misunderstood Spiritists are the bold and rough navigators of the School of Sagres who, through sacrifice and self-denial, brought their activities to an end by discovering a new continent for the world, expanding their hopes and sanctifying their work.

With my characteristic sincerity, I did not miss any opportunity to express my doubts, even expressing my disbelief about spiritual survival, discouraged by any possibility of living beyond my bones and my diseased cells...

It is true that the subjects of Spiritism seduced my imagination, with the prospect of a world better than this one, where all the dreams of creatures lead to death.

Its literature fascinated me with the gentle magnetism of hope, but faith could not flourish in my heart, a sad man buried in difficult, painful experiences.

The books of the Spiritist Doctrine were to my spirit like superb poems of a superior idealism the subjective world, without any semblance of practical reality, where I sank my faculties of analysis in enchanting fiction. Its promises and mystical consolations were the mild anesthetic that had managed to relieve many unfortunate and aching hearts, but mine was already inaccessible to the

marvelous sedative, and the worst patient is always the one who has already experienced the action of all known specifics.

In 1932, a colleague at the Academy of Letters introduced me to “Parnaso de Além-Túmulo” (Parnassus from Beyond the Grave). This anthology, said to be composed through the mediumship of Francisco Cândido Xavier, a clerk from Pedro Leopoldo, impressed experts in Portuguese stylistic expression with its authentic rhymes.

I asked Augusto de Lima for his opinion on this unusual work, but he declined to discuss it, stating:
“Certainly, among the novelties of my land, Pedro Leopoldo competes with a new Baron of Munchhausen."

The truth, however, is that I crossed the heavy, dark waters of the Acheron and returned from the world of shadows, witnessing the great and comforting truth. It is undeniable that not everyone was able to receive me, given the realities of survival.

A visit from a "dead person" is almost always unwelcome. For the living, who base their lives on the pentagram of social conventions, the dead bring only unpleasant truths. They become unwelcome ghosts. We must fit logic to the ideas of our own time.

Having made these considerations, here I am before the reader, with a book of chronicles from Beyond the Grave. This time, I do not need to send my writing to a specific publisher, bound by contract. I feel only sincere esteem for my great friend José Olímpio. The law no longer recognizes my existence. If it did, the rights and activities of the dead would disturb the peace of the living.

While I was consuming brainpower to attend to the imperatives of my stomach, I can now give the chapters without monetary compensation.

The medium is satisfied with his simple candle, within the evangelical framework of "Freely give what you have freely received."

And the Brazilian Spiritist Federation, a venerable institution that Mayor Pedro Ernesto recognized as a public utility, whose Bookstore will print my thoughts, is widely known in Rio de Janeiro for its respectable social purposes, its assistance to the needy, and

its Christian program, full of sanctifying renunciations and selflessness.

Here is the Book with my humble remembrance. May it receive God's blessing, providing comfort to the afflicted and the sad in the microcosm where I lived.

Let those who cannot understand me not rush to judgment. Death will be the same for everyone. Each will be assigned an underground bungalow and the clear sentence of celestial justice.

As for the superior spirits of contemporary criticism, crystallized in the conceptions of the time, let them patiently await the Final Judgment, with its miraculous revelations.

I will not be the one to enlighten their understanding by counting the socks they wore in their entire lives or discovering the exact number of their years through festive and joyful tables. Let them calmly await the gathering call of Jehoshaphat's trumpets.

Humberto de Campos.

Pedro Leopoldo, June 25, 1937

FROM A MANSION IN THE OTHER WORLD

March 27, 1935

I often thought that other surprises awaited a dead man after he had delivered his remains to the earth.

Like a boy going to a trade fair for the first time, I imagined the familiar key-keeper of the great celestial palaces.

I saw St. Peter with his hands clasped under his chin. Tortoiseshell glasses, like those of Nilo Peçanha, perched on his nose. I imagined him scanning with his sleepy, tired eyes the technical studies, reports, maps, and immense books, enunciating the movement of the souls coming from the Earth, like a distinguished clerk in a secretariat.

I presumed him to be a well-preserved old man, like the senators of the monarchy time in Brazil, stroking his long mustache and the gray strands of his respectable beard.

Perhaps the good apostle, unearthing the treasure chest of his memories, would tell me something new: some anecdotes about his life, according to the popular version; facts from his fishing days, certainly full of the youthful antics.

The young women of Sephora and Capernaum in Galilee were tempting creatures with their lips like ripe pomegranates. St. Peter would certainly say something about his adventures, which occurred, of course, before his conversion to the doctrine of the Nazarene.

However, I did not find the key to Heaven. In this disappointment, I came to suppose that the region of the blessed must be nestled in some inaccessible mountain range of clouds.

It was certainly a haven of wonders, where all places would take on religious names, in their highest symbolic expression: Square of the Blessed Souls, Avenue of the Angelic Powers. In the heart of the prodigious city, in resplendent palaces, Saint Cecilia must play her harp accompanying the chorus of eleven thousand virgins. They would be singing to the sound of delightful harmonies to lull the

daughters of Acheron and Night to sleep, so they would not come, with their incandescent axes and cursed vipers to disturb those who forgot their sufferings there, in beatific rest.

From time to time, in that marvelous region, solemnities and celebrations were organized to commemorate the most important events of the Church.

The disembodied popes would officiate at the grand masses and Te Deums, which would be attended by all the saints of the calendar.

St. Francis Xavier, in the same tattered habit he wore while preaching in India; St. Joseph, in his carpenter's attire; St. Sebastian in his Roman soldier's armor; St. Clare, with her beautiful and severe Madonna-like profile, supported by the tiny, restless hands of the archangels, like roses of fair flesh. The well-regarded souls would represent, in the dazzling galleries, the saints that the Church invented for its hagiography.

But... I was unable to find Heaven.

I then judged that the Spiritists were more correct in their opinions. I should find those who had abandoned their carcasses on Earth, continuing the same life. I sought to connect with the phalanxes of Brazilian emigrants from the other world.

I thought of the old society, the illustrious patricians who had taken refuge there, imagining them in a princely residence like that of the Marquis of Abrantes, in the old Dona Carlota, in Botafogo, where the finest flower of Rio de Janeiro society was met, in the last times of the Second Reign. Their meetings, composed of slave-owning nobles of the time, overshadowed the monastic simplicity of the Palace of São Cristóvão.

And I thought to myself: The rabbis of the Sanhedrin, who issued the condemnatory sentence of Jesus Christ, will want to know the news of Hitler, in his fury against the Jews. The remnants of Prince Bismarck, who lost the last war, would want to know the state of Franco-German affairs.
I would tell the Israelites the story of sterilization, and the followers of the illustrious son of Schoenhausen, the issues of the Saar plebiscite.

Each blessed soul would come to me with a request, which I would attend to with the skills of a news-bearer accustomed to the malicious pleasures of gossip.

I was mistaken, however. No one cared about the Earth or their people's affairs.

Rest assured, however, those who stayed behind, for although I did not encounter the Eternal Father with his long beard of snow, as if made of soft white cotton wool, according to Catholic engravings, I did not see the Devil either.

As soon as I came to my senses, they led me to a comfortable mansion, like the Bernardelli House on Copacabana beach. Similar to a friary in Styria, its imposing and grandiose appearance amazed me. I sought to learn from the annals of this mansion from another world the news concerning the earthly planet.

I examined its folios. There was no account of the saints of the heavenly court, as I imagined, nor any allusions to Mephistopheles and the Accursed One. The story of the forbidden fruit, the condemnation of the rebellious angels, the decree of the flood, and the frightening visions of the evangelist in the Apocalypse were ignored.

Religions on Earth are greatly harmed by the abuse of symbols. Only a few facts related to them were found in those documents.

Our world is far too insignificant, from what I could observe in the other life. It comforts me, however, to have discovered some old friends among many new faces.

I found Emilio radically transformed. However, sometimes he insists on appearing to me with a round belly and a good-natured face, as he used to receive his friends at Pascoal, to talk about other people's lives.

"Ah! Son," he always exclaims, "there are moments when I would like to descend to Rio, like Wells' invisible man, and give a good beating to the bandits of our land."
And, in the joy of one who, emptying glasses, filled the Danaids' barrel, he leafs through the notebook of his most recent anecdotes.

Life, however, is no longer identical to that on Earth. New habits. New worries and panoramas. My situation is that of a poor, sick person who suddenly finds himself in a luxurious spa town, with expenses paid by friends.

Recovering my health, I study and meditate. My heart, as I unfold the different pages of the infinity compendiums, beats like that of a new student. I feel like I'm in childhood again.

I put on my little clogs, my short pants, get ready in a hurry, with the ill will of incorrigible boys, and I see myself again before Teacher Sinhá, who looks at me with indulgence, through her sadness of an unloved virgin, and I repeat, pointing to the letters in the primer: _ A B C... A B C D E ...

Ah!! My God, I am now learning the luminous alphabet that Your hand wrote with resplendent golden chalk the books of Nature. Make me a child again so I can understand the lesson You teach me! By rereading the chapters of Your Glory, I know why thistles and jasmines, cedars and herbs flourish on Earth, why the good and the bad exist, in a promiscuous activity in Your house.

I bring no offering from the world, Lord, for Your greatness! I possess nothing but my heart, exhausted from feeling and beating, like a vessel of iniquities. Yet, when You remember the wretched sinner who contemplates You in Your sweet mystery like a lamp of eternal light, around which sis dance in the night, close Your merciful eyes to my weaknesses and let fall into this unclean vessel a root of lilies.

Then, Lord, as You have already put light in my eyes, which still weep, You will plant the lily of peace in my heart that still suffers and loves.

2

LETTER TO THOSE WHO REMAIN

March 28, 1935

In the old Boa Vista Palace, during the Saturday audiences, when he received everyone, Dom Pedro II attended to an old black man with white curly hair, whose face, wrinkled by the cold of many winters, showed the sign of much suffering and mistreatment.

"Ah! My great Lord," exclaimed the unfortunate man, "how hard it is to be a slave!"

The magnanimous emperor looked at his tired hands at the helm of the people's direction and those other hands, wrinkled, with calluses acquired in the harsh work of the slave quarters, and, moved, reassured him:
"Oh, my son, have patience! I am also a slave to my duties, and they are very heavy... Your misfortunes will lessen..."
And he ordered that the old man were freed from his condition of slave.

Later, in the early days of his exile, the kind monarch, aboard the Alagoas, received a visit from his former minister, who asked him about how he felt. The great exile replied:
-In short, I am satisfied and tranquil.

By alluding to his expatriation: It is my letter of manumission... Now I can go wherever I want. The crown was too heavy for the head of the republican monarch. To those who ask in the world about my position in the face of death, I will say that it had for me the brilliance of a May 13th for the children of Angola.

Death did not come to claim my soul when it reveled in the golden nets of illusion. Its scissors did not cut the threads of my youth and dreams, because I possessed nothing but white snow waiting for the sun to melt. The ice of my disillusionments needed that warmth of reality, which death spreads in the path it passes with its devastating scythe.

I resisted; however, it's a siege like Achilles in the indomitable heroism of one who sees the destruction of his walls and redoubts.
In my trench of hot water bags, I saw it arrive almost every day...
I gazed into the blazing pupils of its eyes, begging for its indulgence, and it smiled consolingly at me, promising me more. I could not,

however, guess its deep mystery, because doubt beset my spirit, coiling itself in my reasoning like the tentacles of an octopus.

And, in the barbaric joy, I felt trapped in suffering, like a Roman wrestler crowned with roses.

I triumphed over death and, like Ajax, I gathered my last hopes on the rock of my pain, defying the trident of the gods.

My excessive vigilance brought me insomnia, which ruined the tranquility of my last days. Haunted by deafness, my eyes were already fading like the last lights of a ship sinking in a choppy sea in the silence of the night.

A shadow, moving within the shadows, I did not cower before the abyss. Without faltering, I threw myself into combat, not to repel Moors on the coast, but to raise my heart high, shattered on the stones of the path.

Like a book of experiences for those who came after my steps, or like the luminous ray that lighthouse keepers unbutton on the surface of the waters, warning the unwary of the dangerous and treacherous reefs of the ocean.

Many supposed me corroded by leprosy and vermin as if I were Benedict of Labre, scraping myself with Job's bowl. Yet, I was merely reflecting on the clarity of the stars in my immense twilight.

When I was engaged in the task of sowing resignation, the first and last flower of those who cross the desert of life's uncertainties, death approached my bed; slowly, like someone who feared waking a sick child.

It waited until all the windows and interstices of my feelings were sealed with anesthesia. When the most absolute chaos took my brain, zap! It cut the shackles that held me captive out of love for the other condemned, my brothers, imprisoned in the dungeon of life.

I fell asleep in its arms like a drunkard in the hands of a goddess. Awakening from this momentary lethargy, I understood the reality of life, which I had denied, beyond the bones adorned with the red carnations of the flesh.

“Humberto! Humberto...” Exclaimed a distant voice – “Receive those who send you from Earth!”

I widened my eyes with horror and annoyance:
"No! I don't want to hear eulogies, and I'm not interested in the obituaries in the newspapers right now."

"You're mistaken," he repeated, "the tributes of convention don't even reach here. Hypocrisy is like certain microbes with very short lives. Take the prayers that rose to God for you, from suffocated breasts, where you penetrated with your exhortations and advice. Suffering poured a pitcher of honey over your heart."

I saw descending from an indeterminate point in space, armfuls of inebriating flowers, as if made of resplendent mist, and I heard, enveloping my poor name, prayers woven with gentleness and sweetness.

Ah! I had not seen heaven and its court of the blessed, but God would receive those supplications on His throne of enchanted stars, like the symbolic host of Catholicism is perfumed in the enveloping wave of aromas from a censer.

Our Lady should hear them on Her throne of jasmine embroidered with gold, surrounded by angels who eternalize Her glory.

I inhaled those perfumes deeply. That sensation helped me shift my focus, allowing me to investigate the mysterious, shadowy aspects of my mind, where thoughts seem to arise from somewhere beyond rational thinking. I loved and still suffered, recognizing myself at the threshold of a new struggle.

I found some friends whose hands I shook in fraternal greeting, and I returned here. I returned to speak with the humble and unfortunate, confused in the dust of the road of their existences, like shreds of paper swirling in the wind. I returned to say to those I could not interpret in my suffering skepticism:
-You are not the candidate for the mansion on Praia Vermelha [National Asylum].

Plant, then, in your souls the palm tree of hope. Later, it will discover above your graying heads its green, spiky fans...

Like Marcus Aurelius' grandson, I can add—regarding the death that freed me from Earth's foggy prison:

- It is my letter of manumission. Now, at last, I may go wherever I wish.

The bitterness of the world was too heavy for my heart.

TO MY CHILDREN

April 8, 1935

My children, I come to speak to you as one who has left the night of Tiresias, in the resplendent chariot of Apollo, ascending to the golden and fragrant peaks of Helicon.

All is harmony and beauty in the company of the deities and the genii, but the thought of a blind man, upon reopening his eyes in the brilliance of the light, is for those who remain, far away within the night, where the only hope is a star of sweet and sad light.

I do not come from my subterranean home of Saint John the Baptist [The spirit refers to the cemetery of Saint John], like the dead, who thieves sometimes bring back to the torments of the Earth, because of their sins. In the final dwelling of my body, my ailing eyes and my organic dispositions remained.

Here I am, as if I had drunk a nectar of youth at the banquet of the gods.

However, my children, a rock of mystery and silence rises between us.

I am myself. I was your father, and you were my children. Now we are brothers and sisters. There is nothing more beautiful than the law of fraternal solidarity, outlined by the Creator in His inaccessible glory.

Death has not suppressed my affection, and I still possess my human heart, for which you are the best people in this world.

They say that Orpheus, when he strummed the strings of his lyre, touched the hearts of the wild beasts that gathered tenderly to listen to him. The trees came from afar, transported by his harmony. The rivers halted their rushing currents, pausing to listen to him. There was dazzling beauty in the musical landscape.

Death, my children, sang to me, playing his lute. All my convictions left their primitive places to feel the greatness of its song. I cannot convey this wonderful mystery through the imperfect methods at

my disposal. And even if I could, there is now a specter of doubt among us.

Invited by the Lord, I have also been to the banquet of life. Not in the palaces of popularity or fleeting youth, but in the poor and sad courtyard of suffering, where the beggars of His house are temporarily kept.

My first pain was my first light. When misfortune formed an immense web of bitterness for my destiny, I felt myself in possession of the storehouse of wisdom's clarity.

My pains were my prosperity. However, like Dionysius' courtier, I saw doubt as a sharp sword swinging over my head. There on Earth, between belief and disbelief, it is always present, the sword of Damocles. This is a fatality.

I come to you filled with loving tenderness, and if I cannot individualize myself, presenting myself as the affectionate father, you cannot guarantee that I did not survive. The doubt between us is like night. Love, however, moonlights these shadows.

A dead man, like me, cannot expect certainty or denial from the living who receive his message, for which the argument of doubt will prevail. Nor can he demand anything else, he who in the world would not act otherwise.

Today, more than ever, I feel the need to depersonalize myself, to be once again the ignored son of Dona Anica, the good and holy old lady, who continues to be for me the holiest of mothers. I need to forget myself. However, before my wish is fulfilled, I return to speaking to you paternally, as in the days when I destroyed the phosphate in my brain to fuel my stomach.

My children!... My children!... I am alive... Can't you see me?... But look, look at my heart, how it still beats for you!...

Here, my children, no one asked me if I had gloriously descended the stairs of the Petit Trianon; I was not questioned about my literary triumphs, nor was I asked about my academic regalia. Instead, I was questioned about the causes of the humble and the unfortunate for whom I fought.

Live, therefore, with prudence on the surface of this world of frivolity and vain glories.

In one of Wilde's most delicate poems, the Orkney sisters mourn the death of Narcissus by their favorite spring, transformed into a cup of tears.

"No wonder," they sighed, "that you wept so much!... He was so beautiful!...

"Was Narcissus beautiful?" asked the lake.

"Who better than you could know, if he scorned us all to stretch out on the grasses of your shore, lowering his eyes to contemplate, in the diamond of your wave, his own beauty?

Spring replied:
"I adored Narcissus because, when he sought me with his eyes, I saw, in the mirror of his pupils, the reflection of my own beauty."

My children, men, generally speaking, when they are not Narcissus, enamored of their own beauty, they are the sources of Narcissus

I am not here to exhort you as a priest; I am aware of human weaknesses. However, live a life of work and health, far from corrupting vanity. And, do not forget to pray in the religion of a straightforward conscience.

As a man who was so wicked and sad, I am learning to pray again, as I did in my childhood, at my mother's side, in Parnaíba.

Come, my children!... Let us kneel with our hands clasped... Can't you see that I have come from so far away?! I was happier than the Rich man and Lazarus in the parable, who could not return...

Let us kneel in the temple of the Spirit; bow your heads over my heart. Can you all fit in my arms? Yes, you can...

Let us pray with our thoughts on God, with our souls in infinity.
Our Father... who art in heaven... Hallowed be thy name...

4

IN THE MANSION OF THE DEAD

April 9, 1935

- Do you know that English photographers recorded Sir Conan Doyle's presence at Lady Gaillard's funeral?

This question was addressed to me by Colonel C... da C..., (1) whom I had met on one of my trips through the Northeast. The colonel read my chronicles out of boredom, and in a few minutes, we became friends.

However, I had long ago learned of his passing to the other world due to generalized arteriosclerosis. Time goes by, time comes, we meet again in the infinite wagon of Life, in which we all travel, through eternity.

Like the best embrace we can give far from the living, there we were, the two of us tête-à-tête, without thinking about the clock that regulated our actions in the prison of Earth, nor about the pointers of the stomach, which work there with too much haste.

C. had spiritualist ideas in the world and continued, in the other life, to be interested in the things of his doctrine.

- So, Colonel, won't the life we lead here be very different from what we observed down there? Can a dead person appear at the solemnities of the living, participate in their joys and sorrows, as in this case? Besides, we already know from the Gospel that recommends us to bury the dead.

- Yes, boy - replied my friend, as if evoking a painful scene - but I have enough experience not attending funerals anymore. We usually observe that the living people are afraid of those who have returned here. Here and then, we also feel repulsed when encountering the living. However, what I'm about to tell you happened among those considered dead. I was afraid of two specters in a gloomy cemetery setting.

My friend, with his gaze lost in the distant past, monologued:

- Since that night, I have never attended a friend's funeral again..." I leave that to the incarnate ones, who live playing blind man's buff in their temporary oblivion...

- Tell me, Colonel, what happened? - I said, barely suppressing my curiosity.

“Do you remember,” he began, "the admiration I always expressed for Dr. A.F., whom you never met in person?"

“Vaguely…”

Well, Antonico, as he was known to his friends in private, was one of my closest friends. A renowned lawyer in my hometown, I knew him from the high position he held within the society that respected all his actions and opinions. Dark-skinned, charming, he was the typical Brazilian mulatto. Friendly, intelligent, he won the trust of all who approached him. He was uniquely fortunate. He won every case that was given to him. The most heinous crime presented his perceptive word with an infallible argument in defense. The defendants, acquitted with his collaboration, left the courtroom almost canonized.

Had Antonico gotten into some trouble? The triumph was his. He enjoyed all our consideration and esteem. He had raised his family with irreproachable morality. In some religious ceremonies I attended, I remember finding him there, as a good Catholic, in whose personality our vicar saw one of the most prestigious of his parishioners.

He led charitable initiatives, presided over the religious association, and was known for the uncompromising austerity of his customs.

When I returned from that world, which today represents a penitentiary for us, I brought back fond memories of him.

Imagine, then, my desire to see him again when I learned, in these parts, that he was on the verge of death. I obtained permission to travel to Earth and went to see him again in his luxurious bed, surrounded by extreme care, in a shaded alcove of his comfortable residence.

Potions were ingested. Injections were administered. The doctors were attentively listened to. However, death hovered around the lace bed, with its silent step. After having his abdomen ripped open by a scalpel, an infection had unexpectedly arisen.

Pleurisy appeared, and all punctures were useless. Antonico was dying. I saw him in his final moments, without him seeing me in his semi-consciousness. The doctors at his bedside lamented the passing of the upright man. The priest, who held a delicate crucifix in his waxen hands, recited the prayer for the dying, making pious recommendations to heaven. The wife wept for her husband, the children for their father! In my eyes, that scene was the death of a

just man. After a few hours, I accompanied the funeral procession that was going to deliver those cold remains to the earth.

It is unnecessary to tell you of the pompous funeral rites that the church dispensed for the deceased, by virtue of his eminent position. Prayers. Sprinklings with hyssop soaked in holy water and pleasant Latin.

But, as not all who die immediately detach themselves from their viscera, I waited for my friend to wake up so I could be the first to embrace him.

It was twilight. On that August afternoon, the clouds were reddened, amid the smoke, resembling a foam of blood. There was a smell of wild earth among the silent tombstones, at the foot of the willows and cypresses. I waited. From time to time, the wind stirred the branches of the weeping willows, which seemed to sob in a strange tune.

The gravediggers abandoned their sinister task, and I saw a woman's figure, sneaking among the blackened tombstones. She stopped beside that fresh grave. It was not an incarnate soul. That woman also belonged to the realms of shadows. I observed her from afar.

However, stentorian cries echoed in my ears.

-A. F.! – exclaimed the specter – the moment of my vengeance has arrived! No one can plead with your cause. Neither God nor the Devil can intercede for your fate, just as they could not heal in the world the wounds you opened in my heart. All our witnesses are now mute. The angels here are of stone, and the marble chapels, full of silent crosses, are caskets of rotting flesh. Do you remember me? I am R. S., whom you have afflicted with your infamy!

You are no longer that insinuating dark-skinned man who stole my parents' fortune, destroying their lives, and throwing me into abominable prostitution. The fortune that gave you a name was built on the pedestal of crime.

Do you remember the false promises you made me? Ashamed, I abandoned the land where I was born to earn my bread in the most horrendous trade. I traveled the world, without forgetting your wickedness, and without being able to drown my misfortune in the cup of pleasures.

Meanwhile, the world was yours. Accused of a heinous crime, you were a priest of justice, while I, the unknown victim, was forced to

suffocate my weakness in the social bilges, where men pay the tribute of their miseries. You had society, I had the brothels.

Triumph and consideration belonged to you; contempt and condemnation fell to me. My home was the hospital, from where the last groan escaped from my chest.

My arms, which were born to caress God's angels, like two tree branches full of birds, were transformed by you into tentacles of perdition. I could have had a home where children would bless my caresses and a hardworking husband would be comforted by the kiss of my affection.

I come to condemn you, oh, heartless murderer, in the name of the eternal justice that rules us, above men. For more than five years, I have waited for you in this impenetrable solitude, where you cannot buy the judges' conscience...

You lived in comfort while I suffered in misery, but now hell will be ours!

The colonel paused while I pondered that story.

- The woman was crying, he continued, pitifully. I approached her, unnoticed. My presence was undetected. I looked at the modest, worm-eaten cross that had been torn from those seven feet of earth a few hours earlier to make way for a new grave, and I don't know if by chance, a name was written on it in yellow nails, already disfigured by rust: R. S. - Pray for her.

By a sinister coincidence, the two bodies and two souls were reunited. I tried to do everything for Antonico, but when I looked at the earth that covered his remains, it seemed to me that I saw a pile of bones moving. Skull, tibia, humerus, and clavicles, gathered together under a mysterious action, and I saw a skull rattling its teeth in rage, while steel phalanges seemed to squeeze the neck of my friend's corpse.

- And he, Colonel, that is, the Spirit, was present?

- Yes, he was. Present and awake. I left him there, feeling the horrors of that suffocation.

- But what about God, Colonel? Where was God, who did not have compassion on the repentant sinner?" The colonel looked at me, as if questioning himself, and finally declared:

- Man, I don't know! I believe that God created the world; however, I think that the Earth really is under the Devil's administration.

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(1) In the original message, the names of the people mentioned were given in full. However, as these people have descendants who might be upset by the references made to them, we have decided to keep only their initials.

5

JUDAS ISCARIOT

April 19, 1935

An august silence falls upon the Holy City. The ancient capital of Judea seems to sleep its centuries-old sleep. Beyond lies Gethsemane, where the Divine Master wept in a long night of agony; there is the sacred Golgotha, and in every silent thing there is a trace of the Passion that the ages will forever preserve.

Amid all this scenery, like a crystalline vein of tears, flows the silent Jordan, as if its mute waters, seeking the Dead Sea, wished to hide the unfathomable secrets of the Nazarene from the tumultuous affairs of men.

It was thus, on one of these nights, that I saw Jerusalem, living its eternity of curses.

Spirits can vibrate in direct contact with history. Seeking an intimate relationship with the city of the prophets, I sought to observe the living past of the Holy Places.

It seems that Titus's iconoclastic hands passed through there as executors of an irrevocable decree. Everywhere, a breath of destruction and misfortune remains.

Legions of goblins, shrouded in their ancient garments, roam the sacred ruins, and through the midst of fatalities that weigh upon the dead emporium of the Jews, men do not hear the groans of invisible humanity.

On the silent banks of the Jordan, not far perhaps from the sacred place where the Precursor baptized Jesus Christ, I glimpsed a man sitting on a stone. From his facial expression radiated a captivating sympathy.

"Do you know who this is?" someone murmured in my ear. "This is Judas."

"Judas?!"

"Yes. Spirits sometimes appreciate, despite the progress they have already achieved, going back to visit the places where they were exalted or transgressed, feeling momentarily transported to bygone times. Then they immerse their thoughts in the past, returning to the present, ready for the necessary heroism of the future. Judas usually comes to Earth on the days when the Passion of Our Lord is commemorated, meditating on his past deeds..."

That figure of a man magnetized me. I am not yet free from the reporter's curiosity, but between my sinful wickedness and Judas's perfection, there was an abyss. My audacity, however, and the holy humility of his heart, joined together so that I could cross it, seeking to hear him.

-Are you, in fact, the former son of Iscariot?

– Yes, I am Judas. - Replied that sad man, wiping away a tear in the folds of his long tunic.

- Like Jeremiah of Lamentations, I sometimes contemplate this ruined Jerusalem, meditating on the judgment of transient men...

-Is everything the New Testament says about your role in the tragedy of Jesus' condemnation true?

-Partly... The scribes who wrote the Gospels did not take into account the deep internal struggles and the political divisions overshadowing my actions in the tragedy of the crucifixion. Reflecting now, I see how much those forces influenced my choices.

Pontius Pilate and the tetrarch of Galilee, in addition to their individual interests in the matter, were also responsible for safeguarding the interests of the Roman state, committed to satisfying the religious aspirations of the Jewish elders. Always the same story.

The Sanhedrin desired the kingdom of heaven, fighting for Jehovah with fire and sword; Rome wanted the kingdom of Earth. Jesus was caught between these antagonistic forces with His immaculate purity.

I remember being deeply moved by the Master's socialist ideas, yet I realize that my excessive zeal for His doctrine led me to inadvertently sacrifice its founder.

Looking back, my focus on politics—above compassion—clouded my judgment. Politics was the unique weapon with which I could triumph, and Jesus would not obtain any victory. With His theories, He could never seize the reins of power, since, in His poor man's guise, He felt a holy horror of property.

Then, I planned a silent revolt, like the kind that is planned today on Earth to overthrow a head of state. The Master would take a back seat. I would gather collaborators for a vast and energetic work, like the one later undertaken by Constantine the Great, after

defeating Maxentius at the gates of Rome, which, incidentally, only served to distort Christianity.

Therefore, in handing the Master over to Caiaphas, I did not think things would reach such a lamentable end. Consumed by remorse, I presumed that suicide was the only way to redeem myself in His eyes.

- And did you manage to save yourself through repentance?

- No. I couldn't. Remorse is a preliminary force for reparative work. After my tragic death, I immersed myself in centuries of expiatory suffering for my fault. I suffered horrors in the persecutions inflicted in Rome on the followers of Jesus' doctrine, and my trials culminated in an inquisitorial bonfire, where, imitating the Master, I was betrayed, sold, and usurped.

Victim of treason and betrayal, I left on Earth the last remnants of my crime in 15th-century Europe. From that day on, as I surrendered myself to the love of Christ to all the torments and infamies that debased me, with resignation and pity for my executioners, I closed the cycle of my painful reincarnations on Earth. I felt on my forehead the kiss of forgiveness from my own conscience...

-And today he is meditating on the days that have gone by... I thought sadly.

Yes... I am recapitulating the facts as they happened. United with Him, who is in His luminous Kingdom of the Heights—not yet of this world—I feel on these roads the sign of His divine steps. I still see Him on the Cross, surrendering His destiny to God.

I feel the clamorous injustice of the companions who abandoned Him, and a tender memory comes to me of the few women who supported Him in the ordeal.

In all tributes paid to Him, I am always the repugnant figure of the traitor. I look complacently at those who accuse me, not reflecting on whether they can cast the first stone. The age-old curse weighs on my name, as on these places of misery and misfortune. Personally, I am satiated with justice. I have already been absolved by my conscience in the tribunal of redeeming torments.

-As for the Divine Master - Judas continued, weeping - His mercy is infinite, and not only towards me, because if I received thirty pieces of silver, selling Him to His executioners, for many centuries

He has been criminally sold wholesale and retail throughout the world, at all prices and in all standards of coined gold...

-That's true, I concluded, and the new dealers of Christ don't hang themselves after selling Him.

Judas walked away, heading towards the Holy Sepulchre, and I, lost in the shadows invisible to the world, saw that in the sky some stars shone above the grayish and sad clouds, while the Jordan flowed in its stillness like a sheet of still waters, searching for a dead sea.

TO THOSE WHO STILL LIVE IN THE WORLD'S SHADOW

April 23, 1935

Formerly, I wrote in the shadows for those who remained in the light of Life.

Today, I write in the white light of spirituality for all those who are still immersed in the shadows of the world.

I want to believe, however, that such a difficult task was imposed upon me in the mansions of Death as a strange penance for my good taste as a man who, when he could, gathered the delicious fruits from the paradisiacal tree of our first parents, according to the Scriptures.

However, I do not wish to imitate that old Tiresias who, by dint of uttering pronouncements and judgments, won from the gods the gift of divination in exchange for the precious gifts of sight.

For this reason, my thoughts do not manifest themselves among you who have come here to hear them, like those of the rapping entities who, in Hydesville, North America, through the Fox sisters, lived in the early days of Spiritism, telling stories and giving surprising answers with their noisy and joyful knocks.

I must also clarify, to the feeling of curiosity that has driven you here, that I am not illegally practicing medicine like most of the deceased, who today live diagnosing and prescribing remedies and miraculous waters for the sick.

Nor, in my capacity as a "deceased" reporter, am I the bearer of any sensational message from the communist zealots who have already departed this life, emulators of Lenin and Kropotkin, whose brains, now, must be overflowing with momentous theories for the bitter moment the world is living through.

The objective of my posthumous words is only to demonstrate the disembodied man and the immortality of his attributes. The fact is that you did not see me.

However, tell those outside that you saw the medium. Do not claim that he resembles Mahatma Gandhi because he lacks a loincloth, a goat, and the long years of experience of the nationalist "leader" of India. Nevertheless, recount, sincerely, the story of his patched and sad proletarian clothes and his clean and honest poverty that

walks through this world dragging clogs to atone for his faults in previous incarnations.

As for me, say that I was behind the veil of Isis.

Even so, in my intangible state, I cannot resist the desire to tell you something about this "other life" to which all must return. If I am not in the hells spoken of by Christian theology, I am not in Muhammad's seventh paradise.

I cannot recount my anguish in the bitter prospect of complete abandonment in which I found myself, immediately after opening my eyes in the extravagant realm of Death.

It seemed to me that I was going directly to the Acheron, whose bitter waters I would have to cross like shadows, never to return, because I did not witness any struggle between Saint Gabriel and the Demons, with their tragic scales, for the possession of my soul.

However, after the initial moments of "unusual" apprehension, I spotted the small and simple figure of my Uncle Antoninho, who welcomed me into his loving, saintly arms.

In the company, then, of tender affections, in the fabulous retelling, that is my temporary Abode, I am still bewildered by all the phenomena of survival. I have not yet found the marvelous suns, the spheres, the commentary worlds, the celestial portents that Flammarion describes in his “Plurality of Worlds.”

For my spirit, the Moon continues on its path as the eternal sphinx of space, shrouded in its burlap of a dead nun.

A crazy longing and an endless yearning swirl in my brain: it is the desire to see my father and sister again in the realm of death. I have not yet been able to do so. But in a movement of wonderful retrospection, I was able to return to my childhood in distant Miritiba. I saw its old streets again, half-ruined by the waters of the Piriá and the relentless sands ...

I saw the days that had gone by and felt, once more, the expansive soul of my father, like a strong and joyful branch of the sturdy trunk of the Veras, before me in the living pictures of memory.

I embraced my unforgettable little sister, who was in our modest home like a little angel from the Ascension of Murilo, who had suddenly materialized on the muddy ground...

I rested in the shade of the large, abundant trees, still listening to the caboclo guitars, strumming the sambas of the people of the

northern beaches, which were so well preserved in the enchanting, simple poetry of Juvenal Galeno.

From distant Miritiba I transported myself to Parnaíba, where I vibrated with my great Lilliputian world...

In spirit, I contemplated with my mother the sap-covered leaves of my cashew tree spilling onto the Earth amidst the harmonies of the mournful song of the brown doves from the distant corners of my land.

With intertwined souls I contemplated the ancient ivory figure of that saint who, like an angel, often spread her white wings over my weary spirit. I kissed her wrinkled hands, kneeling, and held the beads of her rosary and the small, clear beads that furtively ran from her eyes, accompanying her prayer...

Hail Mary... Full of grace... Holy Mary... Mother of God...

Ah! Each time my gaze sadly sweeps across the surface of the world, I turn my soul to the firmaments, filled with wonder and awe...

Just recently, among my surprises as a newly disembodied spirit, I found in the existence of spaces, where hours are not counted, an old man, an ancient spirit, in whose millennial heart I presume all experiences have taken refuge.

Long, snowy beards, eyes overflowing with infinite sweetness and piety, from his face, like that of a Doctor of the Law in apostolic times, radiated a current of profound sympathy.

-Master! - I said to him, for lack of another name -What can we do to improve the situation on Earth? The spectacle of the world devastates and frightens me...

The family seems to be dissolving... the home is swaying like rotten fruit, about to fall... Civilization, with its many centuries of laws and institutions, seems to have reached its zenith...

On one side, there are those who immerse themselves in apparent and fictitious enjoyment.

On the other are the hungry multitudes, by the thousands, who have nothing but the sign of the cross torn on their chests, drawn by God with His prestigious hands like the symbols that Constantine had engraved on his banners...

Above all, Master, there is the horrific prospect of war...

There is no tranquility, and the Earth seems more like an immense stove, full of burning materials...

But the kind old spirit answered me with humility and gentleness:

-My son... Forget the world and let men wage war in peace!

I found his paradox amusing, but I can only add:

-Leave the world in peace with its war and its indifference!

It will not be my mouth that blows the trumpet of Jehoshaphat.

Let each one keep his prejudice or his belief.

7
THE GENTLE COMPENSATION

July 31, 1935

- It was Wells who, in one of his audacious fantasies, described the dark and sad valley where a handful of men had lost their sight. Everything for them was the same uniform night, where they dragged themselves along like shadows of life.

Generations had succeeded one another incessantly, centuries had passed, and those beings had erased from their memory the traditions of their ancestors who spoke to them about the strange power of the eyes, which, in their bodies, were nothing more than two shells of darkness.

The world for them was confined to that dark prison. The thunder and the mournful clamor of the afternoon winds meant, to their acuity, the warnings of the witches who populated their desert, and the chirping of the birds the gentle comfort bestowed upon them by the affectionate and cheerful spirits.

But then, one day, a man who can see descends into the mysterious valley.

He tells the children of darkness about the great wonders of the world, the treasures piled up in their empires, the sparkling garlands of light of the full moons, the colorful enthusiasm of the spring auroras...

Everything that the Lord's generous hands have placed in the immense pages of the Nature's book, for the fleeting enchantment of men.

In response, however, a clamor of laughter and apprehension is heard in the dungeon.

The man of the night examines the man of the day with his hands and supposes he has discovered the origin of his absurdities, describing things improbable to him, attributing to his eyes the cause of his madness, concluding that it is necessary to tear out these troublesome organs, like harmful excrescences.

This fantasy is applicable to the earthly world when it comes to new truths. I know this because I've also wandered among the obscure caverns of that valley of mysterious darkness, where those who have had the misfortune to lose the eyes of their soul gather, straying from moral progress.

Wearing my poor shirt in the penitentiary of the world, I laughed at those who came to tell me the dazzling wonders of the homeland of souls. And, regaining my sight in the lands of Death, where I did not find the tenebrous waters of Tartarus and the Styx, I come today, like the misunderstood traveler, to speak to those who are the object of the inhibiting action of a cruel blindness.

I do not believe others understand my arguments now.

A dead man has no business in the world of those who presume themselves the only survivors of the Universe, and I therefore preferred withdrawal when the newspapers opened their columns to debates surrounding my posthumous words, a just reward for my terrible taste in returning to that foggy prison of Life.

I even considered that in the Gospel passage in which the Lord did not allow Lazarus' charitable attention to the Rich Man's plea was not intended to judge them on the scales of merit and demerit. Even then, in that moment of surprise from the law of compensation, the Lord could not be rude.

Neither did the Rich Man return from the smoking flames of his guilty conscience, nor the Poor Man from his banquet of delicacies, because it would not be worthwhile to traverse immeasurable distances to tell the incarnate only what constitutes an inaccessible truth for their understanding.

Long before Hermes Tot, men already bowed before the unfathomable mysteries of Death. Everyone knows its terrible reality.

Alexander knew that under his merciless lash, despite the opulence of his glory, and the pomp of his conquests, he would have to rot his noble remains perhaps mixed with the dust of the lowest of the lowest of the low.

But if there is such a life where Justice and Love prevail, with the divine characteristic of splendid eternity, men are absorbed in Lethe, drowned in the flesh to weep and forget.

The living is the living. The dead are the dead. All the logic of human science is contained in these short phrases. However, when I gave myself over to the soliloquies of my spirit, which I never considered defeated, I heard the solemn voice of the geniuses who watch over us from the blue regions where all our aspirations rise like threads of rose and gold:

- "Do not lose heart, you who have come from the insane struggle in the bitter existence of trials! Bring the balm of your message to your suffering brothers and sisters!... Tell them of God's Mercy and the Supreme Justice that governs destinies!

If, on Earth, countless Spirits are lost in the gorges of pride and wickedness, remember the microcosm in which you lived, where the heaviest tributes are paid to Heaven, in supplications and hopes..."

New energies infiltrated my being.

An irresistible attraction led me to Sebastianópolis, which sparkled. The lights of day drew a dazzling landscape from its beaches.

And I shouted to everyone, from the height of my amazement:

- "Don't you see me?... I am living without the tutelage of evil spirits. I am no longer the grumpy, sad man closed in his bitterness of suffering. It is true that I will not be able to attend the Spiritist meetings, as well as the Thursday sessions at the Academy, but death has not annihilated my life. I think, struggle and suffer as before, believing, however, in luminous eternity!"

No one, however, heard me. I could not make myself feel on the noisy avenues, overflowing with passersby, seeming to me, under the influence of physical impressions, that I was about to be crushed by luxury cars.

In my disillusionment, however, I heard a humble and bouncy voice:

"Look at the Messages from Beyond the Grave!"

"Messages from Humberto de Campos!"

It was the small figure of the newspaper vendor. Generous hands understood, giving him their coins in exchange for my remembrance.

His market, that day, was certainly full of compensation, because a triumphant smile blossomed on his lips, adorning his thin body.

Your joy was enough. Oh! Embittered boy from the hills, you are a sad ornament of the Marvelous City, for me to feel compensated for many toils, because, if my companions did not understand me in the rich patrimony of their intellect, you had, that day, in memory of my humble name, a little joy, comfort, and bread.

8

FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

August 5, 1935

They say that the ghosts of the dead prefer the shadows of the night, bringing you a faded reflection of the mystery in which their eyes have been closed. Everywhere, it is known the story of afflicted souls, who, shackled to the world by obsessive thoughts about those who remained behind, return from the unexplored orbs, where almost all religions have placed their hell and their heaven.

I do not come in this "hour that terrifies," copying the deliberations of the "white ladies," who appear in sunny houses like phantoms of moonlight and mist, contrasting with the heavy darkness of midnight.

It is even too early for a "dead" person to appear, contrary to opinions. Rays of sun still escape between the trees, like wary doves fleeing a night full of shadows.

A magnificent placidity settles over the landscape. It quiets down, gentle as a sheep listening to its shepherd's loving voice. A scene from two thousand years ago comes to mind.

When Christ preached the Sermon on the Mount, specifying the beatitudes, the twilight must have been like this. The same evangelical peace, the same perfumes pouring from the immense cup of heaven. The same hope blossomed in the tormented hearts of men, exhausted Bedouins of these deserts. A gentle stirring of memories leads me to the past...

Attempts to equate Palestine with the mountains of Brazilian hinterland are unproductive. While some believe Spirits have always referenced significant rocky sites such as Sinai and Tabor, we are not the Divine Master.

Some claim that we, the discarnate, serve as precursors like John the Baptist, yet I have not encountered anyone in such a unique position. I acknowledge those who struggle with progress today.

However, my purpose today is not to discuss religious mysticism.

I come to speak to those who, after death, find my words strange, wondering why I do not appear, crying out for forgiveness and mercy, repenting of the most heinous sins.

I have already had occasion to affirm that I have not found the Muslim paradise.

In this "other world," I found my own baggage. My thoughts, my work, the fruits of my labor, of my regeneration in suffering. Without being in the beatitude of Heaven, I also do not know the topography of Hell. The howls of Cerberus have not yet echoed in my ears.

The "nessun maggior dolore," which Dante heard from the lips of Francesca da Rimini, in his pilgrimage through the dungeons of torment, was probably a result of the disturbance of his auditory nerves, because I affirm the opposite. There is no greater pleasure than to remember, in the peace here, our sorrows on Earth.

I am, in fact, greatly guilty, not for my skull-like grimaces meant to elicit laughter from others, but before my conscience, for my stubbornness and incomprehension regarding the problems of Truth. However, God is supreme mercy and, without chaining me to the incandescent columns, has already bound my prodigal son's heart in the gentle shackles of His love.

SPEAKING TO PIRATININGA

August 18, 1935

All things in Brazil speak particularly to our soul: Piratininga, however, is the poem of gold and steel of its people's energies. Its history, within the history of the Fatherland, is a glorious affirmation of sacred heroism.

The same spirit of freedom and autonomy, which in the early stages of its organization motivated the desire to crown Amador Bueno's brow with a king's crown, emancipating itself from its subordinate condition, works today, as it worked in the past, to immortalize with the arm of action the epic of its greatness.

Among the youthful energies of the land, there is a contagious delirium of action and work. The loving effort of man unites with the exuberance of the sap and São Paulo - unfurls, in the vanguard lines, the banner of its progress and its conquests.

From the comfort of their modern cities, the prayer of labor rises to heaven, which God hears, rewarding their industriousness with the joys of abundance.

I have always referred to the city of São Paulo with the affectionate tenderness of my admiration.

And now, far from the disturbances to which the flesh subjects us, inflicting upon us the most bitter of enslavements, I can better appreciate its claims to greatness.

I have a clear vision of its valiant deeds, of the energetic projection of the ideals of its intrepid people, whose activity unfolds in an atmosphere of fraternization among all races, merging within it the most ennobling feelings of human brotherhood.

Today's São Paulo is the compass for those who will study Brazilian ethnology tomorrow.

Alongside its numerous institutes of civilization and culture, Piratininga will have its “Society for Psychic Studies” as a new reality of the spiritualist ideal, which, rallying the ranks of scholars, is preparing to become the light of future humanity.

Thus, another center of benefactors opens on the stage of its evolution, whose action will not be limited to scientific research,

but also to raising the moral level of society, intensifying the bonds of Christian brotherhood.

That is because true scholars know that, if contemporary science is not bankrupt, it cannot, in its current state, offer man the key to immortal happiness.

Humanity is hungry for that love that only God can bestow.

A terrible cold of despair and misfortune blows among men, who have forgotten meditation and prayer.

Science is the figure of Oedipus electrified under the inescapable fatalisms of destiny. The error of those who investigate is to seek wisdom without preparing their hearts, reversing the imperious determinations of Life.

Piratininga is, therefore, preparing the hearts of its children, and from its rich and generous coffers much spiritual bread will be poured forth for the impoverished granaries.

From the emporiums of its greatness in the past came forth the civilizing flags, tearing the heart of the dense jungles, and in the present, new flags will emerge, breaking through the thicket of disbelief in which men have become entangled, to speak the word of truth and love. Its weapons now will be the teachings of the Gospel, and its objective, the discovery of the vein of spiritual gold.

An inexpressible joy overflows from my heart, directing my inexpressible words to São Paulo's people from the tribune of Death; and filled with proud joy, I can exclaim today:

"I thank you, oh Lord! For such precious favors, because, thanks to your goodness, I was able to speak today with St. Paul, when he was devoting himself with courageous fearlessness to the work of immortality, which is the work of the Gospel..."

A MOTHER'S HEART

August 23, 1935

Painful and moving is the letter from this woman from Maranhão that reached my hands, brought on the wings of a trembling and noisy airplane.

A desperate mother, she appeals to the paternal feelings that did not abandon me in the grave, and cries out anguished as if her trembling letters were purplish traces of her heart's blood:

"I ask Humberto de Campos that, even from Beyond, he save my son! He, who did not forget those he left on Earth, cannot deny alms to my soul as a loving mother!"

I remember, moved, the appeal addressed to me by the suffering, in the final days of my life, while I slowly sank in the sailboat of Pain, among the heavy waters of Death's ocean.

I would give anything to send to that suffering woman of the land that was mine the certainty that her son is a creature favored by the gods.

I would do anything to imitate those tender and merciful hands that rested on the downcast brow of the widow's orphan of Nain, resurrecting for a marvelous Mother's heart the energies of the son who suffers under the most painful trials.

Death, however, does not remove from our path the strange vision of fatality and destiny. There is a determinism in the scenario of our existences, created by ourselves. Evil, with its cortege of horrors, is not within this impetuous and unstoppable current, but all its links are formed by suffering.

Men of clay must fight their whole lives, repelling Crime and Sin, but inevitably they will be mired in the swamp of Pain and Death.

What stung me most, after having sought out the lessons of the wise men there, was the futility of their arguments before the irrevocable determinations of destiny. After having traversed the roads of unassuming ignorance, on the immense palace's threshold of

others' experiences, I presumed finding the solution to the enigmas that confound the human brain.

76Though, in all of them, I found the same torment, the same anguishing anxiety.

Face to face with the inflexible pulse of Death, all the science in the world is of irremediable insignificance. In this particular respect, the entire portentous edifice of Pythagoras' philosophy was worth no more than the extravagant doctrinal theories propagated throughout the world.

All those who labor in favor of humankind on Earth stumble upon the impenetrable walls of Shadow. Christ was the only one who spread a gentle light in the dungeon of the flesh, because He did not address the earthly individual, but the spiritual one.

The material world is marked by injustice: laws treat the wealthy leniently and the unfortunate harshly. This division reflects persistent flaws in human nature.

Awakening from long nightmares at the door of the grave's clarity, my first question, regarding the problems that tormented me, was a painful one about the bitter contrasts of the world. Even here, however, the loving geniuses of Wisdom bless, smiling, those who question them, because the deciphering of the enigmas of our existence lies within ourselves.

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Despite an inflexible destiny, there is a force within us that is independent of it, as the source of all our actions and thoughts. We are the weavers of the capricious fabric of our own lives.

The hands that today cut off the happiness of others will tomorrow be gathered like branches—withered in the green foliage of Life.

The iniquities of a Herod may disappear under the mantle of renunciation of a Vincent de Paul. Magdalene's sensuality was purged in the bitter tears of atonement and repentance.

When we can see the past in all its unfolding, after contemplating Messalina on her night of lavish pleasures, we will see her again, dragging herself along the banks of the Tiber, dressed in a horrifying gown of black monstrosities.

I lacked such understanding in my earthly life to comprehend the Truth. May that poor mother from Maranhão consider these realities that edify and save us.

Like an angel of Sorrow at your son's bedside, lift your appeal to the august heart of Him who moves mountains with the gentle breath of His love. Your prayer will rise to the Infinite like a chalice of perfume poured out in the light of the stars that adorn the invisible throne of the Highest.

Surely the angels of Mercy and Sweetness will carry your prayer, as a candid offering from your suffering soul to the magnanimity of the Lady who was the Mystical Rose of Nazareth. Then, at that moment, perhaps the anguished heart of the mother who weeps on Earth will be illuminated by a strange and merciful light. Her unhappy and humble home will, for a few moments, be an altar of this light invisible to mortal eyes.

Two hands of translucent mist will rest like lilies on her oppressed soul, and a loving, soothing voice will whisper in her ears:
"Yes, my daughter!... I heard your prayer and came to ease your suffering, because I also had a Son who died ignominiously on the cross."

II
THE "TÊTE À TÊTE" OF THE SHADOWS

August 28, 1935

When I was still in the world, I wasn't given the opportunity to appreciate the friendly "tête-à-tête" of the Spirits, in the manner of men, with the only difference being that their conversations don't take place at the doors of cafes or bookstores.

It is with surprise that I gather with those I esteem, when I have the opportunity, for a few words of conversation.

There we were, four disembodied souls as if we were four apocalyptic figures in the world, still discussing the petty things of Earth, and the conversation was precisely about the evolution of Spiritist ideas in Brazil.

A venerable figure of these doctrines, who passed away many years ago in Rio de Janeiro, exclaimed:
“Unfortunately, what infests Spiritism in our land is the bad taste for sterile discussions. Our work is continuous, lest many companions engage in bickering through the press, demonstrating to them, with indirect lessons, the futility of their polemics.

Nevertheless, the doctrine has achieved considerable success. Its works of Christian charity are multiplied everywhere, attesting to the labor of the Gospel."

The respectable figure of Bittencourt Sampaio was then remembered, at the beginning of the Spiritist organization in the country, recalling also the cowardice of some companions who, raised to prestigious positions in society and politics, quickly forgot their enthusiasm as believers, switching to the opportunism of new ideologies.

The conversation was at this point when Dr. C..., one of the most charitable physicians in Rio, recently deceased and whose name should not be mentioned, explained:
“It is a pity that we come to understand Spiritism so late, recognizing its logic and moral greatness only after our return from the world. We, doctors, always have our brains worked to exhaustion, unable to solve the problem of survival. It is true that one will never find the being in the autopsy of a corpse, but everything in life is a

profound vibration of spirituality. However, as Science guards its achievements of the past, jealous of its domains, even though we are inclined toward new truths, we are often forced to retreat, fearing the Zaratustras of its infallibility."

"I myself, during my time practicing medicine in Rio de Janeiro, witnessed extraordinary cases unfolding before my eyes. However, I was also a victim of complacency and prejudice."

And Dr. C. ...as if plunging his eyes into the abyss of things past, he continued slowly:
"I was already living on Botafogo beach when an epidemic outbreak of influenza struck the city, with minimal repercussions compared to the epidemic after the war.

As I always counted on several poor friends from the hills, and particularly from Prainha, among those who sought my services, it was no surprise that, one cold and foggy night, I opened the door to receive a visit from a girl of about ten years old, humble and barefoot, who came, trembling and shy, to request my services.

"Doctor," she said, "Mom is very ill, and only you can save her... Would you do me the charity of coming with me?"

I was impressed by her childlike grace and the strange gleam in her eyes, as well as the melancholy smile that played on her small mouth.

I considered everything that required my urgent attention and tried to convince her of the impossibility of following her, promising to attend to her the next day. However, my little interlocutor exclaimed with tears in her eyes:
"Oh! Doctor, don't abandon us. No one, except God's protection, watches over us in this world. If you don't want to help us, Mommy will be lost, and she can't die now. Come!... Didn’t you also have a mother who was the angel of your life?

That girl's last sentence touched my heart deeply, and I remembered the distant times when my mother nurtured the dreams of my existence, buying me books and bread with the sweat of her honest poverty. I had to help that little girl, wherever she went. Medicine was my calling, and on the rainy night that shrouded everything, as if the invisible sky were crying over the darkness of the

world, the taxi rolled along with us, like a noisy ghost, crossing the flooded and deserted streets.

That girl, sad and silent, had bright eyes, lost in the void. Her thin body leaned entirely on the cushions, while her tiny feet hid in the fringe of the carpet.

Remembering her meaningful words, I wanted to pick up the thread of our conversation:
-Has your mother been sick for a long time?

-No, sir. First, it was me; while I was sick, my mother took such good care of me that she became tired and sick herself.

-How does your mother feel?

- She has a high fever. Sleepless nights. Sometimes I cry out to the neighbors, but it seems they don't hear me, because we are always isolated... We often cry a lot because of this abandonment, but Mom says that we need to suffer, giving our hearts to God.

- And how did you know where I live?

- It was a visit from a man I didn't know. He arrived slowly at our door, calling me to the street, saying he was a friend whom you hold in high esteem, and showing me your house. He promised that you would take care of me, because you also had a good and loving mother.

Our conversation was interrupted. The enigmatic little girl ordered the car to stop. She pointed to the location of her residence, extending her small, bony hand, and after a few steps, we knocked on the modest door of a miserable shack.

-Wait, doctor, she said, I'll open the door for you through the back.

And, already restless, unencumbered, she disappeared from my sight. A latch slid carefully in the middle of the night, and I entered the hovel. A flickering, humble lamp, which illuminated the small room with its pale glow, revealed, on the clean cot, a woman's body, disfigured and misshapen.

Her face, furrowed with tears, was the living testament to the cruelest privations and hardships. Niobe was there, petrified in her grief. All the torments were concentrated in that abandoned house.

To my first questions, she answered in a soft, weak voice:
-No, doctor, do not try to snatch my desperate soul from the clutches of Death!" Never have I needed so much, as now, to leave the dungeon of Life forever.

And he continued, in her delirium:
- Nothing remains for me... Let me die!

However, I raised my voice above her lamentations and exclaimed forcefully:
- Madam, I will take all the necessary measures that your case requires. This helplessness will end today. You urgently need to revive yourself! You have much left in the world; you have this affectionate daughter, who awaits your utmost maternal affection.

-My daughter? - Retorted she, half-woman and half-corpse, while two thick tears deeply wounded her pale face

- My daughter has been dead since the day before yesterday!... Look, doctor, there in the room, and don't try to restore health to someone who so desperately needs to die!

Then, astonished, I went to the adjoining apartment. The waxen body of that mysterious child, who had called me in the shadows of the night, was there wrapped in poor, light clothes.

Her motionless face, like a thin doll's, was a portrait of deprivation and hunger. Her large, gleaming eyes were now closed, and on her small mouth lingered the same gentle smile of resigned and sad souls.

I had glided down the avenues with a shadow of the dead.

And, melancholically covering the panel of his memories, our friend concluded:

-After so many years, I still hear the voice of the tiny, graceful ghost; and, in the struggle of life, her gentle advice has often come to mind, which taught me to suffer, surrendering my heart to God...

12
ON NATIONAL DAY

September 7, 1935

Brazil celebrates its "National Day" today. The gold and green flags will be unfurled to the four winds. In the big cities, the echoes of bugles will be heard in military parades, and a vibration of enthusiasm will run through the hearts of patriots.

I also know that many disembodied personalities, who formerly fought for the organization of the nation, today turn to São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro, where they intend to participate in the commemorative ceremonies.

Many of the Tapuia and Tupi chiefs, legitimate owners of the land conquered by the Portuguese, still in the spirit world, will not disdain to wander their eyes through the scenery of their past existences, remembering today their solitary villages, their customs, which the whites perverted, the immensity of the jungles and the melancholy beauties of their deserted beaches.

However, remembering Paicolás, they will recognize some benefits of his influence, alongside his innumerable defects. They will contemplate, enraptured, Avenida Central, Avenida Atlântica, Copacabana beach, the Rússel, Leblon, the sanitation works, and the immense houses of the marvelous city, spilling over the valleys, mountains, and plains, in a hallucination of vertiginous progress. Men and disembodied Spirits will gather, celebrating the festive date.

These solemnities are always beautiful and joyful when viewed within their beautiful significance.

Homelands should be the immense homes of enormous families. United fraternally, they would realize the dream of Canaan from the Scriptures on Earth. However, the more civilization advanced on its path, the more the concept of homeland was distorted in its legitimate expression's essence.

Scientific progress has solved most of the incommunicability problems. Radiotelephony has made the planet a tiny room where countries talk to each other like people.

Transoceanic cruise ships are floating cities, like giant hyphens connecting people. Aircraft, perfected, and admirably arranged plow through the skies, devouring distances.

Roads are built everywhere.

There is an eagerness for communion in all things. Everything tends to unite, to come closer together. However, homelands have never been so far apart from each other as they are now. Never has there been such a great defense of the isolation policy.

The countries have forgotten that existence depends on incessant exchanges. The greatest financial and economic imbalances are inflicted on nations in their collective selfishness.

Dazzled, in a splendid period of its evolution and feeling itself on the threshold of radical transformations in all sectors of its activity, human society listens to the voice of its geniuses and apostles, desiring to eliminate the boundaries of every nuance that separate its members. It is merging into that embrace of Unity that it is beginning to understand.

Yet, politics represents the multi-millennial past. Governments concentrate on force, and the antagonism that prevails between all elements of the present presents a most interesting spectacle.

All peace pacts are lies. Is there a greater contradiction than that of an institution of peace, which should be pure and spontaneous, guarded by armies armed to the teeth? In all modern political systems, the principles of international hegemony prevail. By virtue of such absurdities, war is inevitable. There will be no diplomatic conspiracies that will eliminate it, for now, from the path of men.

Today's war will hurt more deeply. All that science has discovered will be used for war. Bacteria, electricity, machines, and chemicals will all be tools for destruction.

God made Peace, Love, and Brotherhood, but people shape their own fate.

Confused in the labyrinth of their wickedness, they have only been able to illuminate the paths of Life with the burning torches of Death.

At present, the war of nations represents the war of feelings, because a new era of Christian fraternity will blossom on the world's horizons. All Spirits speak of this renewal, and it will appear, illuminating the new day of Humanity.

In this golden age of spirituality, which may not be far off, the world will understand the message of peace from the Divine Lamb. A gentle breeze of comfort and relief will descend from Heaven upon the tormented brows of individuals. The deluge of expiations in which humanity has been involved for centuries will end, and a symbolic bird will once again bring the olive of hope.

Brazil, which, although with immense sacrifices, has been collaborating in the dissemination of the immortality and hope message, in this new era, will sing, with the other nations, the hymn of Peace, understanding, through the moral evolution of its children, the marvelous beauty of the Universal Homeland.

13

THE MASTER'S ORDER

December 20, 1935

As Christmas approached, there was also a murmur of gentle joy in Heaven. The Angels lit stars on the golden mists and vibrated in the air the mysterious harmonies that filled the night of Bethlehem with enchanting sweetness.

The shepherds of paradise sang, and while the divine harps played their strings under the caressing effort of the zephyrs of immensity, the Lord called the Beloved Disciple to his throne of jasmine tinged with stars.

The seer of Patmos did not bear the stigma of decrepitude as in his last days among the Sporades. In his countenance lingered that same adolescent candor that characterized him at the beginning of his apostleship.

-John, said the Master, do you remember my appearance on Earth?

- I remember, Master. It was in the year 749 of the Roman era, despite the arbitrariness of Friar Dionysius, who wrongly placed Your birth in 754, calculating it in the 6th century of the Christian era.

- No, my John – the Lord replied sweetly – it is not the chronological question that interests me in questioning you about the past. It is that in these gentle commemorations the sweet murmur of memories comes to me!

- Ah! yes, Beloved Master – replied the Disciple eagerly – I understand You. You speak of the moral significance of the event. Oh! Yes. I remember... the manger, the star guiding the powerful to the humble stable, the harmonious songs of the shepherds, the resounding joy of the innocent. It seems to us that the animals understood You more than men, to whom You offered the lesson of humility with the treasure of faith and hope.

On that divine night, all the angelic powers of paradise bowed down over the Earth full of groans and bitterness to exalt the meekness and piety of the Lamb.

A promise of peace blossomed for all things with Your appearance upon the world. A tender betrothal had been established between

Earth and Heaven, and I remember the joy with which Your Mother received You in her arms made of love and mercy. One would say, Master, that the golden stars of paradise fashioned, on that night

of indefinable aromas and radiance, a divine honey in the pious heart of Mary!

Looking back in time, my beloved Lord, I see the passage of Your childhood, feeling the martyrdom You suffered, the extermination of children of Your age, the flight in the loving arms of Mary, and the manual labor in the company of Joseph.

Also, Your marvelous visions in the Infinite, in constant communion with Your and our Father, preparing You for the performance of the unique mission that made You abandon for a few moments the sunlit palaces of the celestial mansion to descend upon the mud of the Earth.

- Yes, my John, and, speaking of my duties, how are things going in the world concerning my doctrine?

- They are going badly, My Lord. Since the ecumenical council of Nicaea held to combat the schism of Arius in 325, Your truths have been distorted.

Arianism was followed by the iconoclast movement in 787, and men so contradicted Your teaching of purity and simplicity that they themselves never again understood each other in the interpretation of the Gospel texts.

- But don't you remember, John, that my doctrine was always accessible to all understandings? I left men the lesson of the way, the truth, and the life without having written a single word for them.

-All this is true, Lord. As soon as You returned to Your resplendent empires, we understood that Your teachings must be preserved for future generations. The Gospels are Your biography on Earth.

Yet, in their daily lives, people rely on the veil of matter and symbol. They add their own interpretations to all pure spiritual things. Neither the Gospels nor we have been spared.

In the basilicas of Ravenna and Rome, Matthew appears as a young man, Mark as a lion, Luke as a bull, and I, Lord, am shown as an eagle.

- And my representatives, John, what are they doing?

Master, I am ashamed to say it. Most of them are absorbed in the interests of material life. They often use Your name for personal gain. When they turn to religion, they mostly condemn each other,

forgetting that You taught them to love each other as brothers.

- Discussions and symbols, my dear – the Master said gently – do not impress me so much. You, like me, needed the latter for your sermons.

Regarding the dispute of ideas, do you not remember how much authority I was obliged to expend, even after my return from Earth, so that Peter and Paul would not become enemies? If such disunity prevailed among my apostles, how could we eliminate it from the environment of men, who did not see me, always restless in their inquiries?

... What saddens me is the attachment of my missionaries to the fleeting pleasures of the world!

- That's true, Lord.

- What is the core of my doctrine that currently holds the greatest expressive power?

- It is the department of the Roman bishops, who have gathered within an organization admirable for its discipline, but highly pernicious for its deviations from the truth. The Vatican, Lord, whom You do not know, is a sumptuous heap of the riches of the Earth's moths and worms.

From its comfortable and marvelous palaces radiates a whole movement of consciences' enslavement. While You did not have a stone on which to rest Your aching head, Your representatives sleep their nap on cushions of velvet and gold; while You had the feet macerated on the stones of the rough road, whoever presents himself as Your ambassador carries Your image on sandals adorned with pearls and diamonds.

And alongside such superfluities and absurdities, we find the poor crying from exhaustion and hunger. Beside the opulent luxury of the sumptuous basilicas built in the world as an insult to the glory of Your humility and love, cry the helpless children. The very little ones to whom You extended Your compassionate and merciful arms.

While tears and sobs abound among the unfortunate, in the temples, where Your memory is worshipped, coins overflow in handfuls, seeming, with bitter irony, that money is a defecation of the devil on the welcoming ground of Your house.

-So, my Disciple, can we not nourish any hope?

- Unfortunately, Lord, we must disabuse ourselves of our illusions. By a strange contrast, there are more well-liked atheists in Heaven than those religious people who spoke in Your name on Earth.

- However – whispered the divine lips sweetly – I dedicate the same love to suffering humanity. Notwithstanding the denial of the philosophers, the audacity of science, the scorn of the ungrateful, my piety is unalterable... What do you suggest, my John, to solve such a bitter problem?

- Did You not say, one day, Master, that each one should take up his cross and follow You?

- But I promised the world a Comforter in due time!...

And with clear and limpid eyes, fixed on the pious vision of the love of His Heavenly Father, Jesus exclaimed:

- If the living have betrayed us, my Beloved Disciple, if they traffic with the sacred object of your house, profaning fraternity and love, I will command that the dead speak on Earth in my name.

From this Christmas onward, my John, you will unveil yet another fragment of the mysterious veils that cover the sad night of the tombs so that the truth may resurface from the silent mansions of Death. Those who have already returned by the desolate paths of the grave will return to Earth to spread my message, bringing to those who suffer, with hope placed in Heaven, the blessed lights of my love!...

And since that memorable hour, more than fifty years ago, Spiritism has come, with its prestigious lessons, to bless and support all people on Earth.